

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-12

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H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

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R 091230Z NOV 73

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR CY XF

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY QUERY ON U.S. MONITORING STATIONS

SUMMARY: LEFTIST REPRESENTATIVE HAS RAISED PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION WHETHER GOVT INTENDS TO WIND UP U.S. "SPY STATIONS" IN CYPRUS. GOVT HAS BRIEFLY REJECTED HIS CONTENTION THAT "PRESENCE OF AMERICAN MONITORING STATIONS" HARMS ARAB INTERESTS. OUR CONTINGENCY PRESS LINE IS DESCRIBED BELOW. ASIDE FROM MOMENTARY FLURRY, WE DOUBT LYSSARIDES WILL GET MUCH LOCAL SUPPORT. HOPE TO AVOID SERIOUS EMBARRASSMENT UNLESS ADVERSE TURN IN MID EAST SITUATION LEADS SOVIETS AND ARABS TO PROMOTE THIS INTO MAJOR PROPAGANDA EXERCISE. END SUMMARY

1. PRESS TODAY PUBLISHED FOREIGN MINISTER'S WRITTEN REPLY
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TO PARTLIAMENTARY QUESTION FROM LEFTIST REPRESENTATIVE

LYSSRIDES. LATTER HAD SUBMITTED WRITTEN QUESTION IN WHICH (ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS) HE ASSERTED THAT "AMERICAN MONITORING STATIONS ARE ENGAGED IN DETECTING ALL RADIO SIGNALS BETWEEN THE ARAB STATES", CITED CYPRUS' FRIENDLY LINKS WITH ARABS, CALLED "SPY STATIONS" A BLOW AGAINST CYPRUS, AND ASKED WHETHER GOVT INTENDED TO DEMAND THEIR WINDING UP.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER'S REPLY SAID: "THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS SATISFIED THAT THE INTERESTS OF FRIENDLY AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES ARE NOT AFFECTED BY THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN MONITORING STATIONS IN CYPRUS. THE MINISTRY REGRETS THAT FOR REASONS OF PUBLIC INTEREST IT CANNOT GIVE FURTHER EXPLANATION."

3. LYSSARIDES HAS PERIODICALLY TAKEN SWIPES AT AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS PRESENCE HERE, BUT THIS IS FIRST TIME IN SOME YEARS THAT HE HAS PRESSED IT IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. HE IS QUOTED AS CONSIDERING FOREIGN MINISTER'S REPLY UNSATISFACTORY AND HAS ASKED FOR A HOUSE DEBATE. WE UNDERSTAND NO DATE SCHEDULED.

4. IF ASKED FOR COMMENT, WE PLAN TO SAY WE HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENT.

5. IF PRESSED AND IF ISSUE APPEARS TO BE BUILDING UP, WE WILL GIVE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO QUERIES AS TO WHAT U.S. IS DOING IN THE RADIO FIELD IN CYPRUS:

"I ASSUME YOU ARE AWARE OF FBIS' OPERATION. IT MONITORS AND REPORTS RADIO BROADCASTS FROM THE COUNTRIES IN THIS AREA. WE MAKE THESE REPORTS AVAILABLE TO THE GOVT OF CYPRUS AND MANY OTHER GOVERNMENTS, AND TO UNIVERSITIES AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS. WE ALSO, OF COURSE, HANDLE RELAY TRAFFIC FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. BEYOND THAT DESCRIPTION, I CANNOT GET INTO TECHNICAL DETAILS OF OUR OPERATION."

6. WE INTEND TO STAND ON THAT LINE, WHICH WE HOPE WILL MINIMIZE CURIOSITY. STATEMENT IS VALID, AND IT OFFERS MINIMUM OFFENSE OR DIFFICULTY TO GOC. (WE HAVE TOLD PIO AND FOREIGN MINISTRY OF OUR PROPOSED LINE.)
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7. COMMENT: NO REASON YET TO BELIEVE THAT THIS PRESAGES SERIOUS ASSAULT ON U.S. INTERESTS HERE. LYSSARIDES' TARGET IS IN MOTION. WE NOTIFIED FOREIGN MINISTRY NOV 2 OF EXPECTATION WE WOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCING AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS HERE. WE SUSPECT MORE CYPRIOTS WILL BE CONCERNED ABOUT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF OUR IMPENDING REDUCTION THAN ABOUT HOBGOBLIN WHICH DR. LYSSARIDES IS

ATTEMPTING TO RAISE. FORTUNATE THAT WE INFORMED FOREIGN
MINISTRY BEFORE THIS ISSUE SURFACED, SO AS NOT TO SEEM TO BE
REACTING TO HIS PRESSURE. WE ASSUME THAT IN FUTURE YEARS
THE GOOD DOCTOR WILL CLAIM CREDIT FOR ANY U.S. REDUCTION,
BUT THIS WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE A PARTICULARLY POPULAR CLAIM.

8. THIS OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENT COULD PROVE WRONG IF, AS
RESULT OF SOME ADVERSE TURN IN MID EAST SITUATION, ARABS
OR SOVIETS SHOULD DECIDE TO LAUNCH MAJOR ANTI-U.S. CAMPAIGN
AND USE U.S. PRESENCE HERE AS ONE OF THEMES. END COMMENT

9. POSTSCRIPIT: LYSSARIDES' PAPER "TA NEA" EDITORIALIZED
TODAY AGAINST AMERICAN FACILITIES AND THE BRITISH SOVEREIGN
BASE AREAS.
GRANT

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